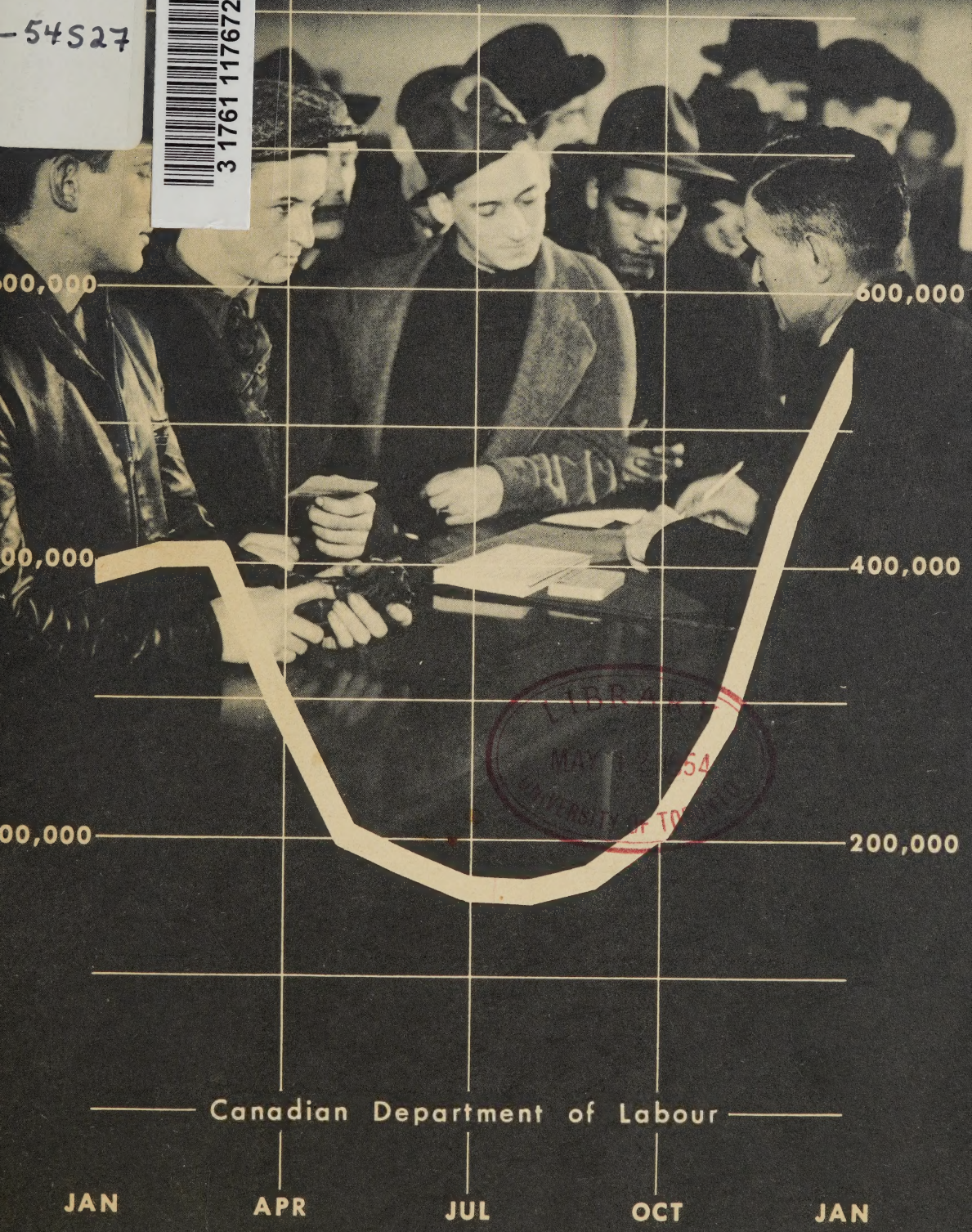


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Economics and Research Branch

# Seasonal Unemployment in Canada

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Canadian Department of Labour





# SEASONAL UNEMPLOYMENT

## A Survey of Seasonal Industries in Canada

by the  
ECONOMICS & RESEARCH BRANCH  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR  
in co-operation with the  
NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

Hon. Milton F. Gregg  
Minister of Labour

Arthur H. Brown  
Deputy Minister

## FOREWORD

*In December, 1952, the National Advisory Council on Manpower requested the National Employment Committee to undertake a study of seasonal unemployment in Canada. In the summer of 1953 the National Employment Committee, through the Regional and Local Employment Committees, questioned over 600 Canadian employers in 18 seasonal industries on the causes of seasonal variations in their employment, on the methods they had developed to reduce such variations and on any suggestions they might have for further action to reduce seasonal employment variations. This report contains an analysis of the employers' replies, prepared by the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour.*

*The selection of the industries to be surveyed was made in cooperation with the National Employment Service of the Unemployment Insurance Commission on the basis of the extent of their seasonal employment variations. Individual employers within these industries were picked, so far as possible, according to the principles of random sampling.*

*The employers' replies have been analyzed according to the industries in which the employers operate. Each of the industry analyses contains some statistical data on seasonal employment variations in the industry and a summary of the employers' replies to the Survey questions.*


Ottawa, April, 1954.

*The Director,  
Economics and Research Branch,  
Department of Labour.*

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## Introduction

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### Definition of Seasonal Unemployment

Seasonal unemployment in Canada is a problem meriting serious consideration and discussion because it involves a recurring annual waste of manpower and frequently of productive capacity.

Seasonal unemployment occurs regularly each year as a result of normal climatic changes or of other circumstances which arise at particular times each year. It is not merely the result of climatic conditions, it reflects employers' and consumers' habits as well. Although the pattern varies, it is usually more severe in countries having marked climatic variations. In Canada, unemployment is usually at a minimum in September and increases to a peak in late winter or early spring.

It is useful to distinguish between seasonal and one or two of the other main kinds of unemployment. Mass unemployment, such as Canada experienced in the thirties, is the result of causes affecting the overall level of economic activity. Frictional unemployment is due to the fact that there are always some people changing jobs, which usually means a brief period of idleness for those involved. Seasonal unemployment, with its regular yearly pattern, should be distinguished from these and other kinds of unemployment.

### Causes of Seasonal Unemployment

Seasonal unemployment is of two main types. The first arises through the direct effects of climate on the production process. It is either impossible or difficult to do certain things in certain seasons. Canadian farmers cannot, with the best will in the world, plant wheat in February. Ice makes inland navigation impracticable in winter and salt-water fishing faces increased difficulties in winter. The canning industry must obviously operate largely in the summer and fall when fresh fruits and vegetables are harvested. On the other hand, logging is a fall and winter industry since the frost and snow make woods transportation easier, and the spring thaw is depended upon to provide high water for the log drives. In these industries seasonal unemployment occurs because the climate determines to a large extent the character and magnitude of production activity.

The other type of seasonal unemployment occurs in industries in which the market rather than the production process is affected by the climate or the time of year. Retail trade, for example, is at a peak from October to December. The clothing industry has peaks in the spring and



fall. Demand for agricultural implements is highest in spring and summer. Various service industries—hotels, restaurants, laundries and dry cleaning establishments—reach peak activity in July, August and September.

### **Seasonal Unemployment and the General Level of Economic Activity**

The amount of seasonal unemployment is, in part, dependent on the general level of economic activity. During the years of general manpower shortage in World War II, the volume of seasonal unemployment was at a low level. During the post-war years, as pressures on the economy gradually eased, the volume of seasonal unemployment has increased year by year. The number employed in the country's seasonal industries has also grown year by year. This means that seasonal unemployment has become a progressively more serious social and economic problem in Canada. For example, during the winter 1953-54, when the general level of economic activity slackened, the extent and volume of seasonal unemployment increased significantly.

### **The Workers Affected**

Seasonal unemployment is difficult to measure because not all workers holding seasonal jobs become unemployed for an extended period. This becomes clear when the different groups of people who engage in seasonal work are considered.

The first group consists mostly of students, housewives, retired people, and others who enter the labour force at peak periods but withdraw when their jobs come to an end or school re-opens. Another group includes those workers who transfer from one industry to another, for example, from farming to logging, as the seasons change. Some shifts are also made by workers from one area to another within the same industry. A third group includes those who work for only a part of the year but who are looking for work for the balance of the year. These are the seasonally unemployed, but they constitute only a part of the total number of workers subject to seasonality of employment.

### **Effects of Seasonal Unemployment**

The most serious result of seasonal unemployment is the waste of manpower involved. An important characteristic of manpower which distinguishes it from other resources is that it cannot be stored, so that labour time not used is permanently lost.

Another important consideration is the annual cost of supporting the seasonally unemployed. Employers and employees jointly bear most of the cost of unemployment insurance benefits, both regular and supplementary, paid to the seasonally unemployed; the Government contributes one-fifth and bears the administrative costs. (During the year beginning July 1, 1952, a total of \$144,239,000 was paid out as unemployment insurance benefits by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Of this total, \$93,111,000 or about 65 per cent was paid out in the five months December to April, inclusive.) For those seasonally unemployed, who are not covered by unemployment insurance, the cost of their unemployment falls on public relief funds and private persons. In addition to these direct costs, there are the intangible personal and social costs which are associated with unemployment, whatever its cause.



Chart 1

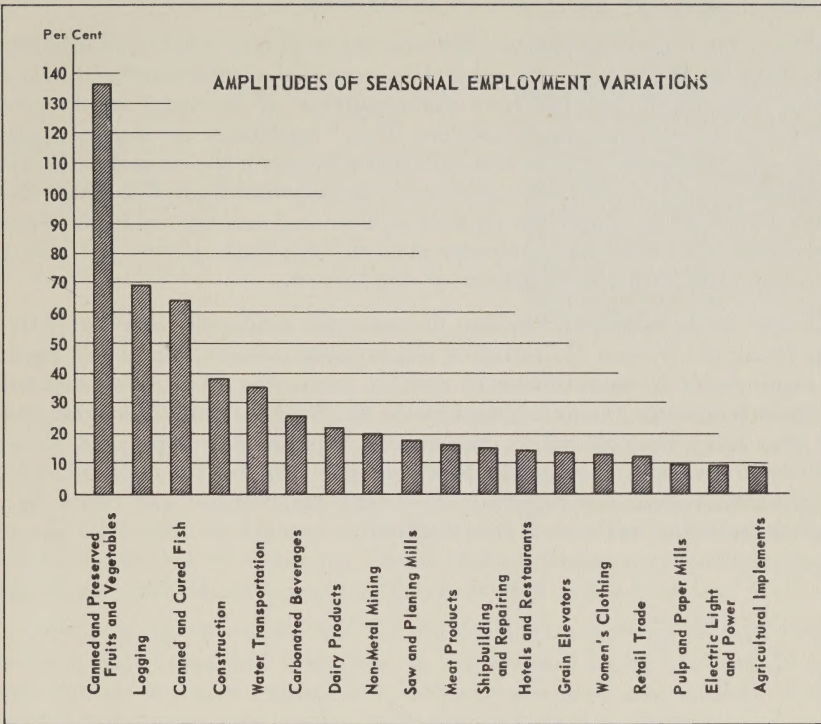
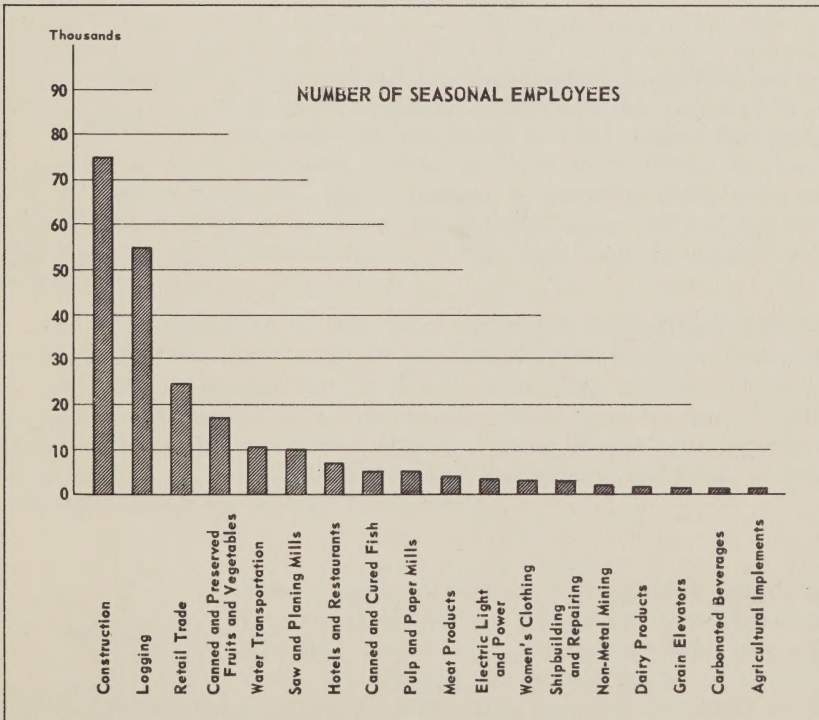


Chart 2



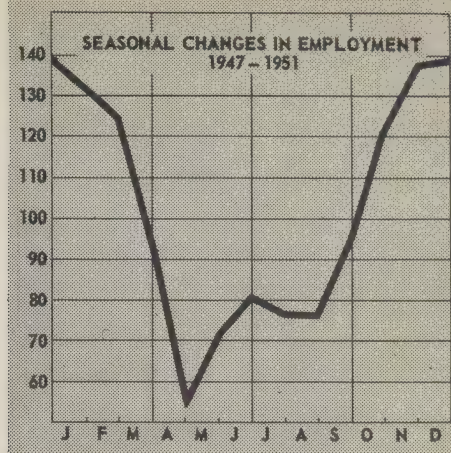
## **Extent of Seasonal Variations in Employment**

The accompanying charts illustrate the extent to which the eighteen industries in the Survey are subject to seasonal employment variations. Chart 1 shows in graphic form the amplitude of seasonal employment variations in the various industries. The "amplitude of seasonal employment variations" means the difference between the annual peak and trough levels of employment expressed as a percentage of average employment. Chart 2 shows the number of seasonal employees in the same industries. These numbers correspond to the amplitude shown in Chart 1, converted into absolute numbers of employees.

The amplitudes and numbers of seasonal employees are calculated from Dominion Bureau of Statistics employment indexes, which are based on employment in establishments usually employing 15 or more workers. In some industries, many employees do not work in establishments that are this large and, therefore, the number of seasonal employees shown in Chart 2 may be considerably less than the total for the industry. This is particularly true for logging, dairy products, canned and cured fish, saw and planing mills and construction.



## Logging - East of the Rockies



### EXTENT

East of the Rockies, the average number of workers employed in logging at the time of peak activity each year is about 156 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. This ratio is highest in Quebec and lowest in Ontario with New Brunswick falling in between. These three provinces account for more than 95 per cent of all logging employment east of the Rockies.

All logging operators east of the Rockies reporting to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be at least 50 per cent of their minimum employment; between one-third and one-half of the reporting operators halt logging operations altogether during part of each year. Most firms have high employment in fall and winter, and low employment in spring and summer, especially in the former.

### CAUSES

Practically all logging operators east of the Rockies agree that climatic conditions are the chief cause of seasonal variations in employment. Since most operators depend on snow to facilitate the movement of logs to rivers and lakes, logging is naturally reduced or at a standstill when there is no snow. Impassable roads and melting snow make logging very difficult in spring though high water is necessary for the log drives.

Truck transportation of logs is of minor but increasing importance east of the Rockies. Trucks require good solid roads which are frequently not available in spring. The gradually increasing practice of cutting logs in summer depends to a considerable extent upon the use of trucks and other mechanical equipment. Summer cutting is gaining in importance though it is made more difficult by flies, mosquitoes and heat, and may be stopped altogether by high fire hazard.

### REMEDIES

Some logging firms have successfully lengthened the cutting and hauling season and thereby reduced seasonal employment variations. This has been done by building all-season roads, introducing planned and selective cutting by areas (cut inaccessible areas in the

most favourable season and cut accessible areas in the least favourable season), providing better housing and recreational facilities in order to retain a stable labour force, and by increasing the use of machinery.

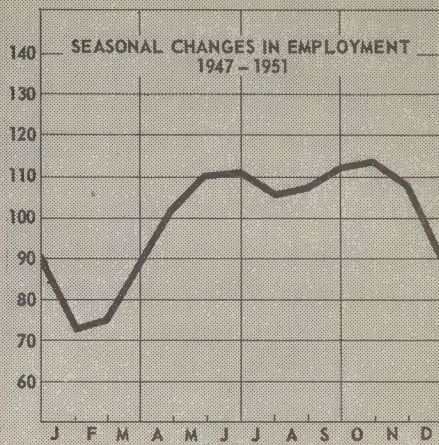
Another successful method used by many companies active in both the logging and sawmilling industries is the integration of mill and bush work, that is, the transfer of workers from bush to mill and vice-versa as the need arises. This is a relatively common practice but it alone does not result in continuous employment for all workers since milling requires a smaller labour force than logging. This method, moreover, is not applicable to pulp and paper companies because pulp and paper mills operate continuously and the large labour force required to cut pulpwood cannot be employed in the mills during the spring and summer. Pulp and paper companies especially have tried to stabilize logging employment by lengthening the cutting season.

Year-round logging operations are accepted by most employers in logging east of the Rockies as the only complete remedy for seasonal variations in logging employment. Year-round logging could be brought about, employers suggest, by the establishment of permanent forest communities, more planning of cutting operations, building of better roads and equipment, including fire-fighting equipment, greater use of machinery, and by developing a labour force more versatile in the use of machines.

At present, many of the seasonal workers employed by logging companies are farmers or fishermen who return to their farms or nets when bush work is finished. Since logging in eastern Canada has a seasonal pattern running counter to the seasonal pattern of most other industries, the overall effect which the elimination of seasonal variations in logging might have is not clear. It is possible that such a reduction would increase rather than decrease the total amount of seasonal unemployment in Canada. Logging provides winter jobs for a large group of workers and a reduction of seasonal employment variation in logging would mean that some of these winter jobs would disappear. However, if seasonal variations were reduced simultaneously in all industries, including agriculture and fishing, this objection would be overcome.



## Logging - British Columbia



### EXTENT

In British Columbia, the average number of workers employed in logging at the time of peak activity each year is about 58 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. This ratio is only about one-third as large as for the rest of Canada. The comparative smallness of seasonal employment variations in British Columbia logging is a result partly of climate and partly of greater mechanization. British Columbia loggers form about one quarter of the national total.

More than half the logging operators in British Columbia reporting to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be between 50 and 100 per cent of their minimum employment. As for the others, a few report increases of less than 50 per cent and the remainder shut down completely for part of each year. Those shutting down are a smaller group percentage-wise in British Columbia than in the rest of Canada. In contrast to logging east of the Rockies, logging in British Columbia has its busy season in late spring, summer, and fall and its slack season in winter and early spring.

Logging in the interior of British Columbia differs from coastal logging. The former has seasonal patterns and characteristics similar to logging in eastern Canada, but it is of lesser importance than coastal logging. The seasonal variations described above are determined largely by coastal logging.

### CAUSES

British Columbia logging operators say that climatic conditions are the chief cause of seasonal variations in employment. Deep snow in winter, impassable roads in spring and very dry forests in summer are the specific conditions causing seasonal employment variations. In the absence of closures because of fire hazard, summer is the period of greatest activity.

## REMEDIES

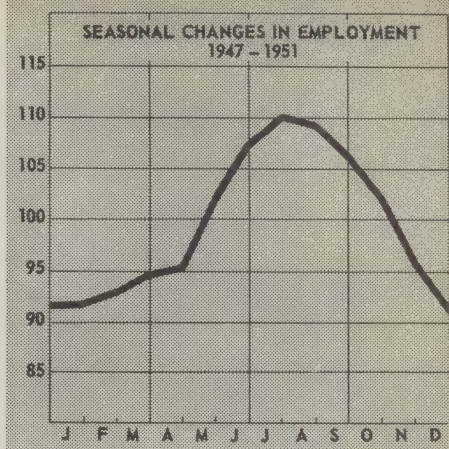
Doing maintenance work and mechanical repairs in slack periods has reduced seasonal employment variations for some British Columbia companies.

Integration of logging and milling operations has lessened seasonal variations in the employment of firms active in both industries.

As was the case east of the Rockies, greater mechanization and more planning are suggested to reduce further seasonal employment variations. Since excess of snow in winter and lack of rain in summer are impossible to overcome, the organized transfer of workers between bush and mill and vice-versa is looked upon as the most practical way to reduce the effects of seasonal employment variations in British Columbia logging.



## Saw and Planing Mills



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in Canada in plywood and veneer mills, saw mills and planing mills at the time of peak activity each year is about 20 per cent greater than at the lowest point in the slack period. This ratio is greatest in New Brunswick, with Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia following in that order. In British Columbia the number of seasonal workers is proportionately much less than in the Eastern provinces. Climatic conditions in British Columbia are conducive to year-round operations by most mills; in other provinces many mills must shut down for a part of each year.

About one-quarter of the mill operators reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations and an additional half have variations of not more than 50 per cent of their minimum employment. About one-eighth have seasonal increases of not more than 100 per cent and the remainder shut down completely for part of each year. The proportion of all operators who shut down is probably greater than the Survey results would suggest.

Summer and fall are the usual periods of high activity and winter and spring the periods of low activity, though there are many exceptions to this general rule. The seasonal patterns of individual mills depend on their locations, methods and products. Plywood and veneer mills do not seem to have as clearly defined patterns as other types of mills.

### CAUSES

Seasonal changes in the supply of logs are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in plywood and veneer mills. These changes, in turn, are due to seasonal variations in logging activity. In addition, climatic conditions influence the operations of mills that depend upon water transportation of logs or that take their logs out of mill ponds. Poor road conditions in spring affect truck transportation of both logs and finished products.

Seasonal employment variations in saw mills are caused chiefly by climatic conditions—ice in mill ponds in winter and high fire hazard in summer. Bad roads in spring and seasonal fluctuations in the demand

for lumber, particularly from the construction industry, are subsidiary causes of seasonal employment variations. The seasonal nature of logging influences the work pattern of saw mills though this is not as important for saw mills as for plywood and veneer mills.

In planing mills seasonal employment variations can be traced to seasonal fluctuations in demand for the product, principally from the construction industry. Climatic conditions play a part here as well, influencing both supply and demand. Spring highway restrictions and road conditions interfere with truck movements of both rough and planed lumber. Seasonal variations in output of saw mills, the suppliers of the raw material, sometimes affect planing mills.

#### REMEDIES

Since the principal cause of seasonal employment variations differs for the three types of mills, remedial action taken or suggested differs accordingly. Stockpiling of logs is the most successful method developed to reduce seasonal employment variations in plywood and veneer mills. More use of truck transportation, it is suggested, would overcome variations caused by the freezing of mill ponds, rivers and lakes.

Techniques that have proved useful in stabilizing saw mill employment are: stockpiling of raw materials and finished products to overcome transportation, supply and demand problems; integration of logging and milling operations, including transfer of workers between mill and bush; better roads; planned cutting to overcome supply difficulties; sales activity to reduce demand fluctuations; and use of snow removal equipment to permit winter operations.

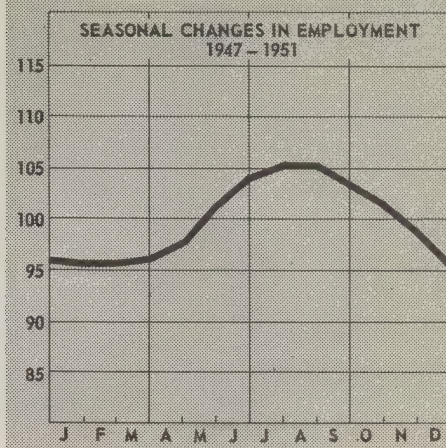
Construction of all-season roads, active promotion of construction, greater co-operation between labour and management, long-term planning of production and no over-hiring for temporary boom periods, are suggestions for further reducing seasonal employment variations in saw mills.

The chief methods used to stabilize employment in planing mills have been aimed at overcoming or offsetting seasonal fluctuations in demand: stockpiling finished products and, in some cases, manufacturing pre-fabricated houses in the off-season; diversified production; producing for a national rather than a regional market; doing repair and maintenance work in the off-season; granting vacations when slack; and varying the length of the work-week. Some planing mills also stockpile rough lumber in order to overcome seasonal changes in the supply of their raw material.

The most important suggestion for stabilizing employment in planing mills is that construction contracts (especially government and institutional contracts) be awarded earlier in the year so that long term planning will stabilize demand. Standardization of products, especially for the construction industry, is also suggested.



## Pulp and Paper Mills



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in pulp and paper mills at the time of peak activity each year is about 10 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. This ratio is highest in New Brunswick with Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia following in that order.

One-quarter of the pulp and paper mills reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations. An additional half have seasonal increases of not more than 25 per cent of their minimum employment and most of the remainder have increases in employment up to 75 per cent. A few pulp and paper mills, obvious exceptions, shut down for part of each year. For pulp and paper mills having seasonal employment variations, summer is the season of peak employment and winter the season of least employment.

### CAUSES

The most important cause of seasonal employment variations in pulp and paper mills is seasonal fluctuations in the supply of raw materials, principally pulpwood, but also sulphur, coal, limestone and electric power. In part, these variations are caused by the effects of climate on transportation facilities such as waterways and roads. Seasonal fluctuations in demand for the products of pulp and paper mills, especially building paper and paper board, and the hiring of vacation replacements in summer, are less important causes of seasonal employment variations.

Many mills have overcome difficulties arising from fluctuations in the supply of pulpwood by stockpiling logs when their movement by water is possible, and supplies are freely available. The hiring of the necessary employees for stockpiling work is the only cause of seasonal employment variations for some mills.

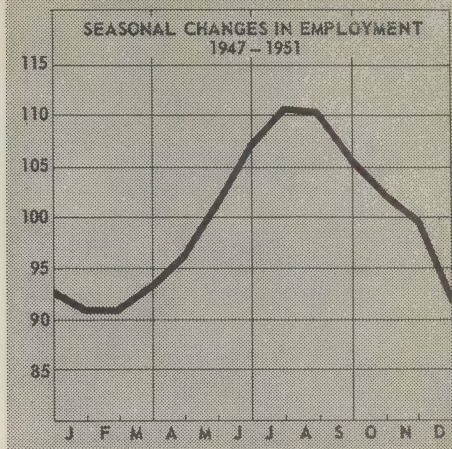
## REMEDIES

Stockpiling of both raw materials and finished products is the most commonly used technique for reducing seasonal employment variations in pulp and paper mills. A few mills attempt to organize transfers of seasonal workers to other employment when their jobs come to an end.

Year-round logging is suggested by some operators as one way of reducing seasonal employment variations in pulp and paper mills. Other suggestions are: hiring of students as vacation replacements (this would reduce seasonal unemployment since students leave the labour force when their vacations are over), and the establishment of a flexible work week (for example 48 hours in the busy season, 32 in the slack season, average 40 hours).



## Non-Metal Mining



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in non-metal mines at the time of peak activity each year is about 22 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack season. For Quebec, where over two-thirds of total employment in the industry occurs, the ratio is only 8 per cent. Most non-metal miners in Quebec are engaged in asbestos mining which has much steadier employment than other branches of the industry.

One quarter of the non-metal mines reporting to the Survey have no seasonal variations in employment, and an additional half have increases of not more than 100 per cent of their minimum employment. The remainder, principally producers of peat moss, have seasonal increases of more than 100 per cent. Large employers in this industry tend to have small seasonal employment variations and vice-versa; this means that average seasonal variations for the industry are less than the figures quoted in this paragraph would suggest.

Most non-metal mines have peak employment in summer and the remainder in autumn; minimum employment comes in winter for most firms and in spring for others. Seasonal patterns vary somewhat with the mineral extracted. Peat moss producers, for example, have a short busy season during the summer harvest months and a long slack period extending from fall through spring.

### CAUSES

The most important cause of seasonal employment variations in non-metal mines is seasonal variations in demand for their products. The demand pattern for gypsum, for example, is affected by the seasonal nature of the construction industry. Demand for peat moss is highest in spring when the use of moss in greenhouses and gardens is at a peak.

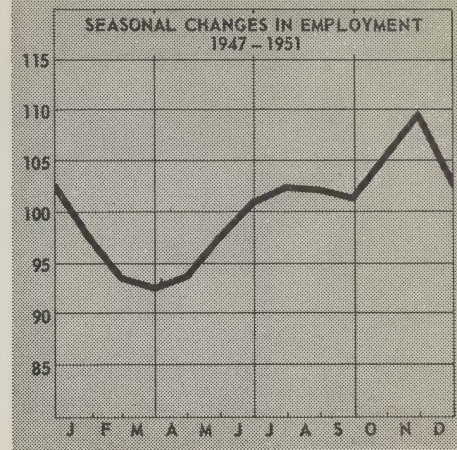
In addition, climatic conditions affect the operation of open-pit mines and other above-ground extraction facilities, which are common in this industry. Climatic conditions also influence non-metal mines through the closing of inland navigation (which affects, for example, exports of asbestos) and the break-up of roads in spring.

## REMEDIES

Some non-metal mining companies have reduced seasonal variations in employment by undertaking the processing of minerals when mining is not feasible, by switching from one mineral to another as the seasons change (for example, from mica to feldspar), and by doing repair and maintenance work in the off-season. Peat moss companies have not attempted to reduce seasonal employment variations. Farmers, and students, housewives and other persons not continuously in the labour force, constitute most of the casual labour needed for the peat moss harvest. The operators feel that aside from giving continuous employment to their other employees engaged in processing and packaging, little need be done since their seasonal employees are generally not looking for year-round jobs.



## Meat Products



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in meat products plants at the time of peak activity each year is about 18 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack season.

This ratio is highest in Saskatchewan with Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario following in that order.

Seasonal employment variations for meat products plants are much smaller in eastern than in western provinces. These differences arise from a number of causes. In western Canada the animals raised are largely cattle, and there are only limited facilities for carrying them over the winter. In eastern Canada, the ratio of cattle raised to other livestock, such as hogs and lambs, is smaller; most farmers can carry animals over the winter if they wish and meat products plants manufacture a greater variety of products.

One-third of the firms reporting to the Survey have no seasonal increases in employment; the remainder have seasonal increases ranging upward to over 100 per cent of their minimum employment. Most firms reporting small seasonal employment variations are located in eastern Canada and most firms reporting high seasonal variations are located in the Prairie Provinces. Maximum activity for eastern firms comes in summer and fall, and minimum activity in winter and, to a lesser extent, in spring. Western companies are busiest in fall and slackest in winter, with low activity in spring and summer.

### CAUSES

Seasonal demand and supply fluctuations are about equally important causes of seasonal employment variations in meat products plants. Demand for fresh and cured meat falls in summer and demand for canned and cooked meat rises; total demand for meat falls in summer. Demand is also affected by various religious and traditional seasons (for example, less meat in Lent, and turkey at Christmas). Demand is the dominating cause of seasonal employment variations for plants in eastern Canada.

Livestock supplies also vary seasonally especially in western Canada. Relatively few animals are carried over the winter on the prairies and consequently there are heavy slaughterings in the fall. Variations in supply are the dominating cause of seasonal employment variations for plants in western Canada. Spring road conditions affect supplies of livestock indirectly, especially in eastern Canada.

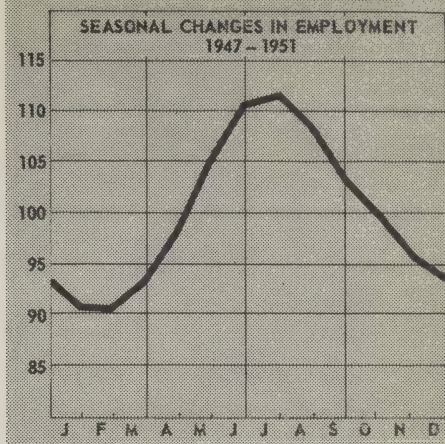
#### REMEDIES

Many firms overcome demand and supply fluctuations by carrying meat in cold storage till market conditions warrant selling it. Diversified production, including the development of a wide variety of "summer" meats, has counteracted seasonal demand variations for some firms. Others switch to canning meat when demand falls, or "push" sales harder in the off-season. Seasonal employment variations are also reduced by moving employees from department to department as needed. Some plants employ married women who do not want year-round jobs as seasonal help; this does not reduce seasonal employment variations but it may reduce seasonal unemployment.

Some operators suggest a year-round supply of livestock to reduce seasonal employment variations but they do not state how this could be brought about. Other employers suggest careful planning and scheduling of production, a wide range of products, coordination of production and personnel departments to avoid over-hiring, and allowing employees to work over-time in busy seasons rather than hiring extra employees.



## Dairy Products



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in dairy products plants at the time of peak activity each year is about 24 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack season. One-fifth of the employers in this industry reporting to the Survey say they have no seasonal employment variations and an additional two-thirds have seasonal increases of not more than 50 per cent of their minimum employment. The remainder have seasonal variations ranging upward to over 100 per cent. Manufacturers of ice-cream have somewhat larger seasonal increases than other companies. Dairy products plants have peak employment in summer and lowest employment in winter.

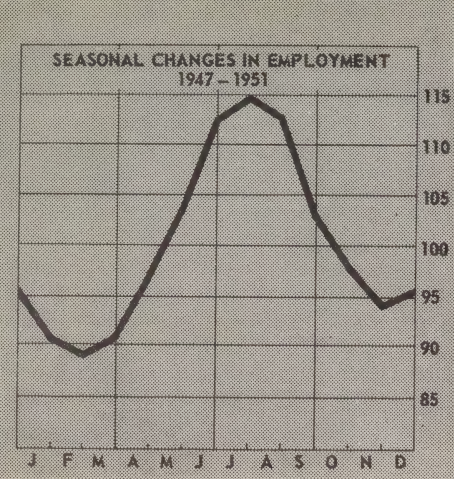
### CAUSES

Seasonal variations in the supply of milk are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in dairy products plants. Milk production is greatest in summer when cattle are pastured outdoors. In addition, spring road conditions sometimes interfere with transportation of milk. Demand for certain dairy products—processed milk and ice-cream—is highest in summer.

### REMEDIES

Most of the methods used in dairy products plants to reduce seasonal employment variations are designed to create work during the slack season, for example, doing maintenance and repair work in winter and undertaking production of food lines for which demand is highest in winter. Attempts have also been made by advertising to persuade the public that ice-cream is a year-round food. Some plants grant vacations in the slack season and a very few keep their staff at full strength the year-round, even though there is not enough work to keep them busy at all times, because they believe that this is cheaper than an annual cycle of hiring, training and laying off seasonal workers.

Steady year-round production of milk, which might be achieved by higher prices for milk and planned cattle-feeding programs, is suggested as a possible method of eliminating seasonal employment variations in dairy products plants. More advertising was also suggested to overcome the effect of seasonal fluctuations in demand for dairy products.



## Carbonated Beverages

### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in carbonated beverage plants at the time of peak activity each year is about 29 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period.

Carbonated beverages producers reporting to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be from less than 25 to over 100 per cent of their minimum employment. None of the producers state that they have no seasonal employment variations, and only a few report variations of more than 100 per cent. Two-thirds of the firms have increases of not more than 50 per cent. Maximum employment comes in the summer months and employment is also above average just before Christmas. Minimum employment occurs in winter with low activity in fall and spring.

### CAUSES

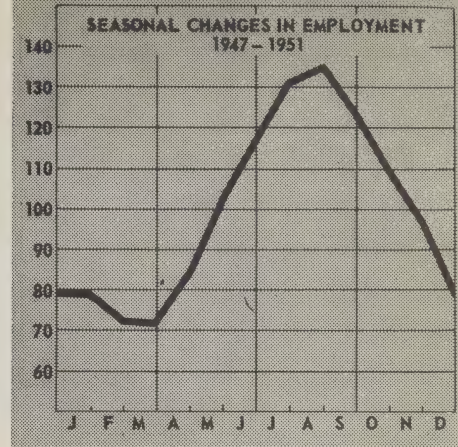
Seasonal employment variations in carbonated beverages plants are caused almost exclusively by fluctuations in the demand for the product, which in turn is affected by climatic conditions. Sales in summer are 500 per cent greater than in winter, and 40 per cent of total annual sales are made in June, July and August, according to two estimates supplied by bottlers.

### REMEDIES

Maintenance and repair work are deferred until the the slack season by many soft drink producers to reduce seasonal employment variations. Advertising and other promotional work is carried on in fall, winter, and spring to increase demand.



## Canned and Cured Fish



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in the canned and cured fish industry at the time of peak activity each year is about 89 per cent greater than at the lowest point in the slack period. The ratios for Nova Scotia and British Columbia are 40 and 144 per cent respectively.

Fish canning and curing companies reporting to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be from 25 to well over 100 per cent of their minimum employment. Most companies have increases of at least 100 per cent and some shut down completely for part of each year. British Columbia operators have greater variations than those in other provinces.

The seasons of minimum and maximum employment vary according to the region. East of the Rockies, spring and summer are both active seasons and fall and winter are the off-seasons. In British Columbia, summer is the busiest period and winter is the slackest period.

### CAUSES

Seasonal fluctuations in the supply of fish affect the employment levels of a great many fish canning and curing plants. On the East Coast generally, and in Nova Scotia in particular, a large part of the canning and curing is of fish taken off-shore and at deep-sea, for example, cod, haddock, and halibut. Climatic conditions that curtail fishing in winter, and the run of these fish are the principal seasonal factors affecting supplies for processing plants, although international conventions limit catches of some fish and specify the type of gear to be used for others.

In British Columbia, most of the fish landed are caught in-shore and inland where fishing is subject to government regulations as well as natural restrictions. Government regulations may specify when and where fishing may take place and the type of tackle to be used. In addition, salmon fishing, which is of major importance in British Columbia, is limited to a short season when the fish are running in schools. Climatic conditions are of secondary importance to West Coast fishing.

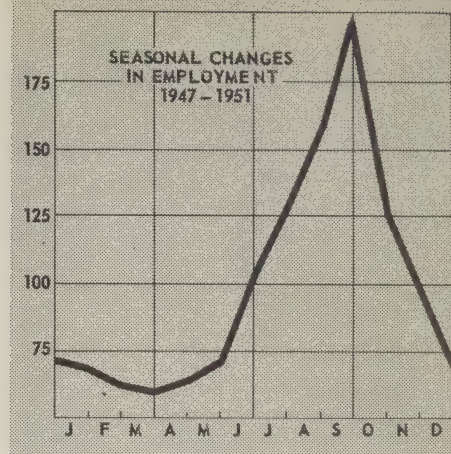
Fluctuations in the demand for fish, caused for example by Lent, are a minor cause of variations in employment.

## REMEDIES

Diversified production—both as to kinds of fish processed and types of products manufactured—has provided greater stability of operations for some eastern fish processing plants. Increased mechanization and planning has helped others. Mechanization of fishing operations has been encouraged in order to stabilize the supply of fish. Some British Columbia canners have also attempted diversification of production: halibut is handled in late spring, salmon in late summer and herring in late fall and early winter, but the staff required for salmon canning is greater than for handling halibut or herring. In addition, some British Columbia firms make it a point to do repair and maintenance work in the off-season.

Better organization, greater integration and increased mechanization of fishing fleets and processing plants are suggested as methods for further reducing seasonal variations caused by supply factors.

## Canned and Preserved Fruits and Vegetables



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in the canned and preserved fruits and vegetables industry at the time of peak activity each year is about 234 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack season. This ratio is slightly higher for both Ontario and British Columbia, the only provinces for which the information is available.

A few canned and preserved fruits and vegetables companies reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations, but the remainder have increases ranging up to well over 1,000 per cent of their minimum employment. Almost two-thirds of the companies reported increases of at least 100 per cent. Maximum employment occurs in summer and fall, and minimum employment in winter and spring.

### CAUSES

Seasonal fluctuations in the supply of the chief raw materials, fresh fruits and vegetables, are the most important cause of seasonal employment variations in fruit and vegetable canning and preserving plants. The extent to which these variations affect plants depends on the length of the harvest season and how perishable the raw material is. Firms that manufacture pickles and apple juices, for example, are not affected as much as those that can tomatoes and berries. In the case of pickles and apple juice, some stockpiling of raw materials and scheduling of production are possible.

Of lesser importance is the fact that demand for canned and preserved foods is subject to seasonal fluctuations. When fresh fruits and vegetables are available, demand for the canned variety declines.

### REMEDIES

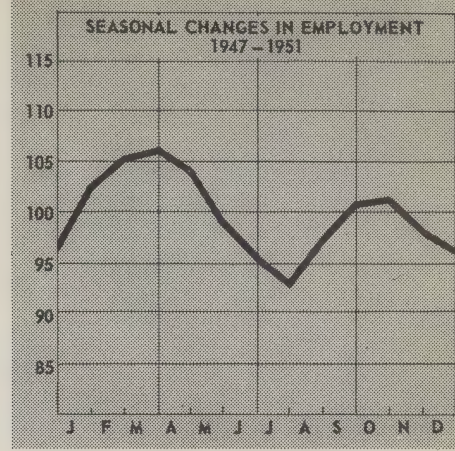
Many housewives, students, and other persons who do not want year-round jobs are employed in this industry during the busy season. This does not reduce employment variations but it does reduce seasonal unemployment because these workers leave the labour force



when their jobs come to an end. In addition, use of cold storage facilities has reduced seasonal employment variations for some firms. A greater variety of products has also proved helpful and scheduled production and stockpiling of raw materials are feasible in a few cases.

Suggestions for further reductions are more and better selling techniques, diversified production, and the addition of non-seasonal or at least non-perishable products to present lines.

## Women's Clothing



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in women's clothing plants at the time of peak activity each year is about 14 per cent greater than at the lowest point in the slack period. The percentages for Quebec and Ontario, where over 90 per cent of employment in the industry occurs, do not differ much from the national average.

About one-eighth of the manufacturers of women's clothing reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations; the others have increases ranging up to 100 per cent of the minimum employment. The usual periods of high employment are from February to May and from October to November; in other months employment is below average.

In contrast with most other industries, employment in women's clothing manufacturing has two seasonal employment cycles per year instead of one. Employment is above average in late winter and spring, and again in the fall. It is below average in summer and after rising in the autumn, it declines in December to rise again after the new year begins. This employment pattern is not necessarily followed by all companies, and particularly not by those making only one type of clothing. Bathing suit manufacturers, for example, do not have the same employment patterns as manufacturers of overcoats.

### CAUSES

Seasonal fluctuations in demand for women's clothing are the major cause of seasonal variations in the industry. Annual changes in styles force producers to concentrate manufacturing in a short period of time. Demand is also affected by the switch from winter to summer garments and back again. Some firms produce only on an order basis; orders follow fashion changes and production follows orders. This results, of course, in seasonal variations in employment.

Seasonal fluctuations in supplies of textiles affect some women's apparel manufacturers, particularly dress and suit manufacturers. Materials and colours change with styles and textiles are altered accordingly. These changes put a premium on speed and tend to compress employment into short periods.

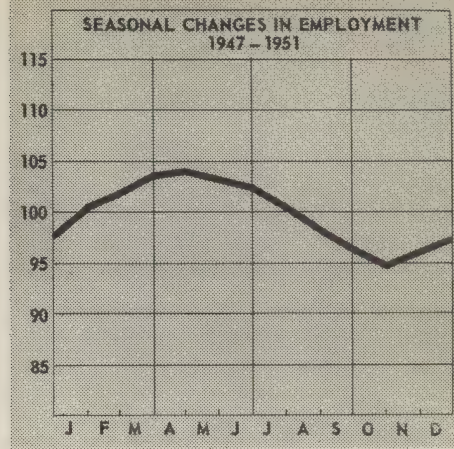
## REMEDIES

Most of the steps taken to reduce seasonal employment variations are designed to increase demand in the slack season. By distributing samples earlier and by encouraging retailers to order earlier in the season, some reductions in employment variations have been made. New lines and styles have been added by some firms in order to increase slack season demand, and sales are "pushed" in the off-season by others. In addition, the slack season is sometimes used for training unskilled workers, and a few firms produce at or near cost during the months when they would otherwise be forced to shut down.

Earlier ordering by wholesale and retail buyers would assist the industry to reduce seasonal employment variations. Greater diversification of products and stockpiling of "standard" garments in the off-season are also suggested.



## Agricultural Implements



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in agricultural implements plants at the time of peak activity each year is about 9 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. The ratio for Ontario, where over 90 per cent of the industry is located, is also 9 per cent. (These ratios are based on average experience for the years 1947-1951 when the industry was working at or near capacity. Since then, both domestic and export demand have declined with resultant signs of increasing seasonal employment variations in the industry.)

A very few manufacturers of agricultural implements reporting to the Survey have no seasonal increases in employment. The others have increases ranging up to about 100 per cent of their minimum employment. Most firms have seasonal increases of about 30 per cent or less; only in rare cases—mostly small firms—do the variations approach 100 per cent. The larger firms producing a “long line” of implements have relatively small seasonal employment variations.

High employment in this industry comes in late winter, spring and early summer, and low employment in late summer, fall and early winter. The employment patterns of individual firms are determined largely by the sizes of the firms and type or types of implements manufactured, and they may differ radically from the pattern for the industry as a whole.

### CAUSES

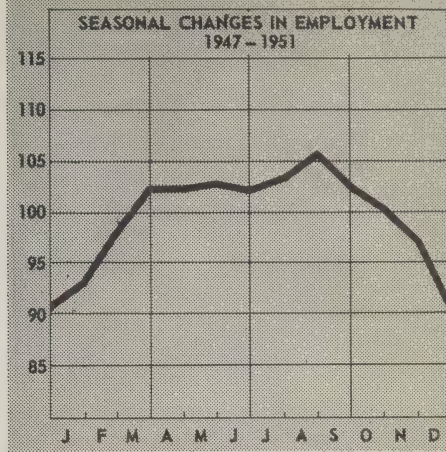
Seasonal changes in demand for agricultural implements are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in this industry. Many agricultural implements have a very limited season of usefulness. Demand for a particular implement is naturally greatest just before and during the period in which it can be utilized. Export demand has a similar impact on the industry though production for foreign and domestic markets may be scheduled for different times.

## REMEDIES

The scheduling of production on the basis of previous sales experience is used to increase employment stability by many companies in the industry. Decentralized warehouse operations, spread over the country, have made greater inventory accumulation possible and thereby reduced seasonal employment variations for one large firm. Some firms manufacture for export when domestic demand is low, and others make repair parts and sub-assemblies in the off-season. (Storage of whole implements makes heavy demands for space.) A few firms switch to the fabrication of other types of metal products when demand for agricultural implements is low.

New products and increased exports are the chief suggestions made for further reducing seasonal employment variations.

## Shipbuilding and Repairing



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in shipyards at the time of peak activity each year is about 17 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. The ratio for Nova Scotia is about the same as the national average; for Quebec it is considerably greater, and for British Columbia considerably smaller. Seventy-five per cent of all employment in the industry is in these three provinces.

Twenty per cent of the shipyards reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations. The remainder estimate their seasonal increases to range upwards to more than 100 per cent. Half the firms have seasonal increases of less than 25 per cent and variations in excess of 100 per cent are rare.

For the country as a whole, the month of highest employment is September and the month of lowest employment is January; this is the net result of different patterns in different provinces. The pattern in Quebec coincides with the national pattern. On both coasts the peak occurs in spring and the trough in autumn; in Ontario the peak occurs in winter and the trough in spring and summer.

### CAUSES

Seasonal fluctuations in demand for the repair services of the industry are the most important cause of seasonal employment variations. Shipbuilding proper is not generally subject to seasonal fluctuations particularly in the larger yards; repair work on the other hand is a highly seasonal operation. The level of activity in ship repairing is affected by the locations of the shipyards as well as by the season. The closing of the St. Lawrence river to ocean-going vessels increases the demand for repair work in the ice-free Atlantic coast ports. Along the St. Lawrence, repairs are made on ocean-going vessels when the ships are able to enter the river but not, of course, when water transportation there is halted. On the Great Lakes, activity is greatest in winter when the lake ships are inactive and can undergo extensive overhauling.

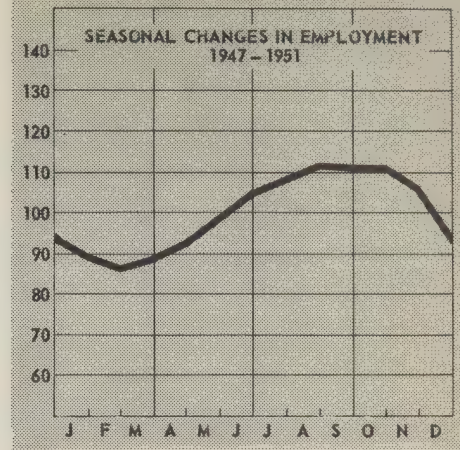


On both the East and West Coasts, small shipyards which concentrate on the repair of fishing boats have their periods of maximum activity during the off-season for fishing, while the larger yards which cater to the needs of coastal or overseas vessels undertake repairs as the need arises and not necessarily according to any particular seasonal pattern. However, there is a definite seasonal employment pattern on the Atlantic coast because much of the water transportation business there is done in winter when the St. Lawrence is closed. In addition to demand, climatic conditions, particularly cold weather, affect the operations of some shipyards.

#### REMEDIES

Some companies have reduced seasonal employment variations by undertaking both shipbuilding and repairing when formerly only one or the other was done. Other companies take other iron and steel work when shipbuilding and repairing are slack. Shipbuilding companies sometimes heat the hulls of vessels under construction so that work on the interior can proceed in cold weather.

## Construction - General Contractors Buildings and Structures



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in "Construction—Buildings and Structures" (including special trade work) at the time of peak activity each year is 28 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. The ratios for all provinces except Ontario (which has about 40 per cent of total employment in the industry) are higher than the national average. The ratio for British Columbia is only slightly higher than the average but the ratios for the Maritime Provinces, Quebec, and the Prairie Provinces are much higher.

General contractors in this sector of the construction industry replying to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be from 10 to 500 per cent of their minimum employment. Only a very few contractors shut down completely for part of each year and over a third of the contractors have seasonal increases in employment of more than 100 per cent. In general, the smaller companies have larger seasonal employment increases than do the larger companies. The busy season in this industry is from spring through fall, the peak coming in summer, while winter is the period of minimum employment.

### CAUSES

Climatic conditions are by far the most important cause of seasonal employment variations in this sector of the construction industry. Excavating, bricklaying, roofing, steel erection and concrete pouring are made more difficult by cold, snow, ice and rain. It is estimated that winter conditions increase construction costs by up to 10 per cent.

Another important cause of seasonal employment variations is the seasonal fluctuation in the demand for construction work. This is largely a matter of custom and applies particularly to the construction of small buildings and homes. People associate construction work with warmer weather even if modern materials and methods permit winter work. Seasonal fluctuations in supplies of materials such as sand and gravel are a minor cause of seasonal employment variations.

## REMEDIES

The commonest technique used to reduce seasonal employment variations is "to get the building closed in by winter". Then, with the use of artificial heat and light, construction can continue on the interior throughout the winter. Improved methods, such as use of tarpaulins and the addition of calcium chloride to concrete, and improved equipment, such as heaters for sand and gravel, have helped to reduce seasonal employment variations. In addition, some contractors do maintenance and repair work, and others carry out construction on their own account in winter.

Other methods used are price adjustments—lower mark-ups for winter work or no increase in prices for work done in winter, even though it may be more costly than work done in other seasons.

Contractors have many suggestions for further reducing seasonal employment variations in this sector of construction. One group of suggestions is concerned with the timing of calls for tenders. Tenders, especially on government contracts, should be called in fall and winter so that actual construction can begin early in the spring.

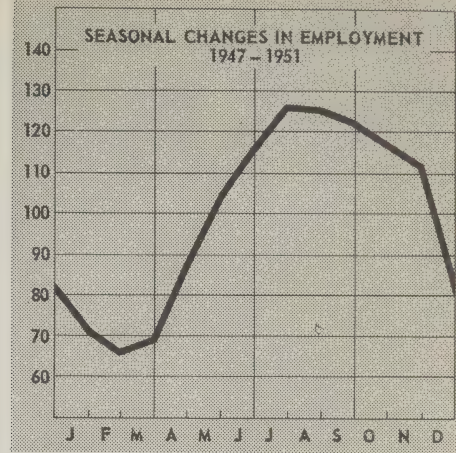
Other suggestions are that owners rather than contractors should pay the extra costs of winter construction so that contractors will avoid under-estimating such costs and then abandoning work during the winter if actual costs exceed their estimates. It is also suggested that the government should pay such extra costs rather than pay unemployment benefits to unemployed construction workers.

A third group of recommendations deals with public education. "Before any real strides can be made", stated one contractor, "the problem requires full appreciation by all parties—the owner, the architect, and the contractor—in order to get early planning, early design, early start at the work". Campaigns to inform the public that inside construction work is possible in the winter and that qualified labour is more easily obtained then, would be helpful.

A fourth group of suggestions concerns the matter of costs: wage rates should be varied downwards in winter so that attractive estimates can be made for winter work; the amount of inside work (which can be done in winter) should be increased by providing long-term financing for alterations and repairs as is done now for new home construction.



## Construction - General Contractors, Highways, Bridges and Streets



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in "Construction—Highways, Bridges and Streets" at the time of peak activity each year is about 92 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. The ratios for Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia are less than the national average while those for the other provinces are greater.

General contractors in this sector of the construction industry in reporting to the Survey estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be from 10 to over 500 per cent of their minimum employment. A few contractors shut down completely for part of each year. The average size of the reported seasonal increases is greater than for the "Buildings and Structures" sector. Two-thirds of the contractors have seasonal increases of more than 100 per cent and the size of the firms does not appear to have any relation to the size of the seasonal increases in employment.

### CAUSES

Climatic conditions—rain, snow, ice and frost—are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in the construction of "highways, bridges and streets". Winter weather makes this type of construction difficult or impossible or increases costs sharply. Seasonal fluctuations in demand, especially the time when tenders are called (usually in spring), is another important determinant of seasonal employment variations in this sector of the industry.

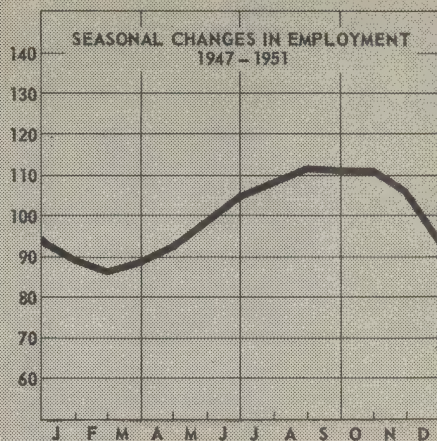
### REMEDIES

Since this type of construction is made very difficult by winter conditions, most methods used to stabilize employment are directed toward deferring work which can be done in winter until that time, for example, repair and maintenance of equipment, especially heavy machinery, building new equipment, and making alterations to the buildings and equipment of contractors. Another technique is to grant paid vacations to employees during the slack period.

Some types of work such as rock drilling and blasting can be carried on in winter and a few contractors try to get such work to do in the cold weather. A few bridge contractors do the necessary excavating work before the winter sets in and then put in cribbing and pour concrete in winter. On the other hand, some contractors claim that it is very difficult or costly to pour concrete in winter.

A common suggestion made by contractors in this part of the industry is that tenders should be called in winter, not spring, so that an earlier start can be made and the work spread more evenly over the spring, summer and fall.

## Construction - Special Trade Contractors



### EXTENT

The employees of special trade contractors are grouped with those of "General Contractors—Buildings and Structures", so that no estimate can be made of the number of seasonal employees in this part of the industry. About one-sixth of the special trade contractors replying to the Survey say they have no seasonal increases in employment. The others report seasonal increases in employment ranging up to 100 per cent of their minimum employment. None have increases of more than 100 per cent. This is in sharp contrast to the increases reported by general contractors, but it should be noted that the Survey did not cover all kinds of special trade contractors, and the trades covered were not the most seasonal. Peak employment comes in summer, with high employment in fall; minimum employment comes in winter, and spring is a season of average levels of employment.

### CAUSES

Although a considerable part of special trade work is done indoors, climatic conditions are still the major cause of seasonal employment variations in this sector of the construction industry. Rain and cold are the principal climatic conditions affecting outdoor activities.

The second most important cause is seasonal fluctuations in demand for special trade work. In many cases demand for the services of special trade contractors comes from general contractors, and since construction generally is seasonal, the derived demand is also seasonal. The progress of the general contractor or other special trades may also cause variations in the activity of special trade contractors.

Fluctuations in demand for special trade work for repairs and alterations from the general public follow the usual seasonal pattern.

### REMEDIES

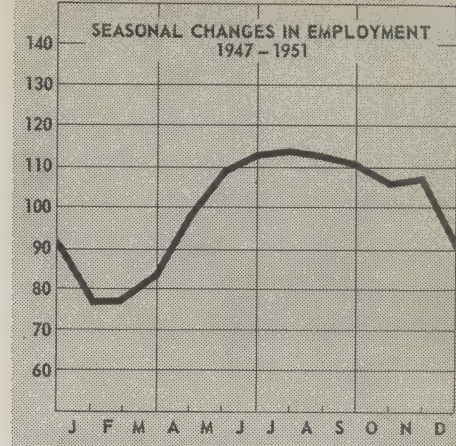
A great variety of methods are used to stabilize employment: do work on own account in the slack season; secure contracts providing year-round work; undertake contracts for work which can be done in own work shop; do different sized jobs, not large ones alone; get



more factory maintenance work which is continuous in nature; plan work for continuity; keep in close touch with customers requiring service work.

The problem of the timing of calls for tenders comes up again with special trade contractors. Architects and builders should be induced to call for tenders early so that estimates can be made in the winter and the work started early in the spring. In the case of special trade work on interiors, buildings should be ready for inside work by winter; government contracts for repairs and alterations should specify that the work be done in the winter months. Advertising campaigns to induce the public to have repairs and alterations done in winter would also help to reduce seasonal employment variations in this sector of the construction industry.

## Water Transportation



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in water transportation at the time of peak activity each year is about 46 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period.

The ratios for Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec, particularly the last two, are much higher than the national average; the ratio for British Columbia is much lower than the average.

The Atlantic coast ports, particularly Saint John, obtain much of their business when the St. Lawrence is closed. Nova Scotia ports do a much larger coastal business and a more year-round overseas trade than Saint John. Along the St. Lawrence River and in the Great Lakes region and on most other inland waterways, activity is at a complete standstill due to ice from December till early April. On the Pacific coast, where there is no competing inland waterway, the water transportation business is much more stable. Although log-towing and barge movements are mostly seasonal, the industry there is able to maintain much greater stability than elsewhere in Canada.

Some water transportation companies reporting to the Survey have no seasonal employment variations. These companies are engaged in transportation from coastal ports, particularly those on the Pacific coast. The remainder have seasonal increases ranging up to over 100 per cent of their minimum employment. About one-quarter of the reporting firms, all operating on inland waterways, shut down for part of each year.

On inland waterways, maximum employment comes in summer with high employment in spring and fall; minimum employment comes in winter. On the Atlantic coast, winter and spring are the busy periods and summer and fall are the slack periods. On the Pacific coast, this pattern is reversed; summer and fall are the busy seasons and winter and spring are the slack seasons.

### CAUSES

Climatic conditions are the most important cause of seasonal employment variations in water transportation. Most companies operating on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River must shut down due to ice for several months each year.

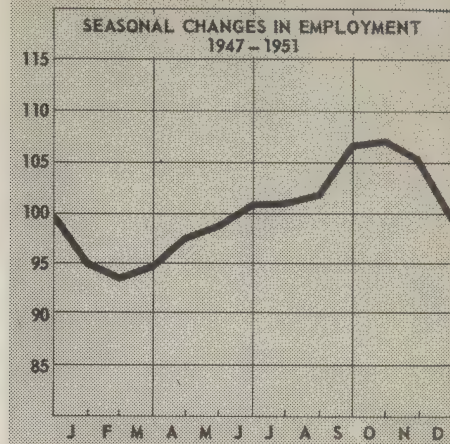
The second most important cause of seasonal employment variations is the seasonal fluctuation in demand for the service, an indirect result of climatic variations. This is particularly true for companies operating from Atlantic coast ports. Demand there varies inversely with the level of activities on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. On the Pacific coast, where activity in water transportation is relatively stable, towing operations vary seasonally in step with changes in logging and construction operations.

#### REMEDIES

Some companies try to keep part of their crews (particularly officers) busy all of the year by using them to do repair and maintenance work in the slack season. A few companies encourage their men to accumulate leave credits so that they can take this leave with pay when work is not available. In this way lay-offs are delayed as long as possible.



## Grain Elevators



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in grain elevators at the time of peak activity each year is about 15 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period.

About one-quarter of the elevator operators reporting to the Survey say they have no seasonal employment variations. The others estimate their seasonal increases in employment to range upwards to over 100 per cent of their minimum employment. About three-quarters of the total have increases of 25 per cent or less. The seasons of maximum and minimum employment differ for two groups of elevators—those west of the Lakehead, and those at the Lakehead and east. For the former, the busy seasons are summer and fall and the slack season is winter and to a lesser extent, spring. For elevators at the Lakehead and east, maximum employment is in summer with high employment in spring and fall. Minimum employment comes in winter.

### CAUSES

The general level of employment and activity at grain elevators depends on several factors such as location, available transportation facilities, crop yield and export and domestic demand. Country or "line" elevators located in the wheat growing areas usually have peak activity when the grain is being harvested and when the stored grain is being marketed. The terminal elevators on the prairies and at the Lakehead and Churchill are usually busiest in the fall when the harvested grain moves eastward by rail and water. When the lake boats are frozen in during the winter months, smaller shipments of grain are handled entirely by rail. Activity at elevators on the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence follows much the same pattern as Lakehead elevators though at a slightly later time. On the Atlantic seaboard elevators have their most active shipping season during the winter and spring when the St. Lawrence and northern ports are closed. Terminal elevators on the Pacific coast remain active throughout most of the year although shipments from this area are greatest in early spring and late summer.

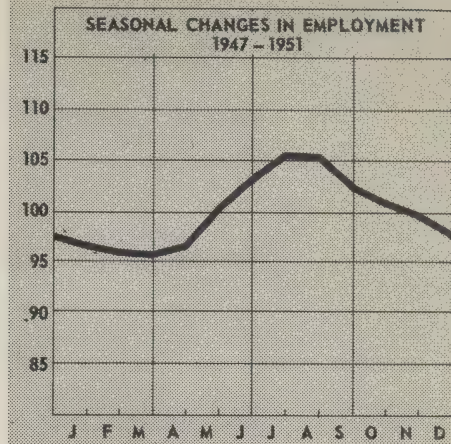
Demand for the services of all elevators depends basically upon the size of the crops harvested, but other factors may modify the impact of the crops on the elevators. If there is no carry-over, if there is no shortage of boxcars or of lake or ocean shipping, and if there is high export demand, then the busy season at elevators will tend to be compressed into a relatively short period. If, however, one or more of these conditions does not obtain, then elevators will become "plugged" at one point or another, or perhaps at all points in the chain. Activity at the elevators varies with the speed and volume of grain movements through them. Movements are determined by the factors mentioned above, some of which may themselves vary seasonally and some of which are non-seasonal in nature.

Seasonal fluctuations in the demand for the services of elevators are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in the industry. Most elevators are affected by seasonal variations in grain movements to export ports. The end of the lake and river navigation season reduces grain shipments since it is cheapest to ship by water and most grain moves this way. A small group of elevators are governed chiefly by the domestic demand for grain (used mostly for animal feeds) which fluctuates seasonally causing seasonal variations in employment. For elevators in western Canada, climatic conditions are a cause of seasonal variations in employment. Construction and repair work at the elevators, which is a fairly important activity in the industry, is halted in winter.

#### REMEDIES

Since this industry is dominated by seasonal factors almost completely beyond its control, elevator operators generally have not been able to reduce seasonal variations, although increased rail movements of grain in winter help to stabilize employment. A few elevators have been able to reduce seasonal employment variations by undertaking complementary activities such as the sale of chemical spray equipment when grain movements are slow. A few other elevators, which serve the domestic market, have been able to reduce seasonal employment variations by creating better distribution facilities for animal feeds.

## Electric Light and Power



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed by electric light and power companies at the time of peak activity each year is about 10 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. Half the companies reporting to the Survey state that they have no seasonal variations in employment; an additional quarter have seasonal increases of 25 per cent or less of their minimum employment; and the remaining quarter have increases up to 500 per cent. For those companies with seasonal employment variations, maximum employment comes in summer with high employment in spring and fall; winter is the season of minimum employment. This pattern is very similar to that for construction.

### CAUSES

All of the companies which have seasonal employment variations state that they are caused by climatic conditions: cold weather restricts outside construction activities. Many electric light and power companies undertake their own construction, either wholly or in part, of both electric stations and of transmission and distribution lines. Outside maintenance also is easier in spring, summer and fall than in winter. In some companies the need to hire vacation replacements for their own staff causes seasonal increases in their employment in summer. Employment in the operation of electric stations undergoes little change even though the electric "load" increases seasonally when the hours of daylight are reduced.

### REMEDIES

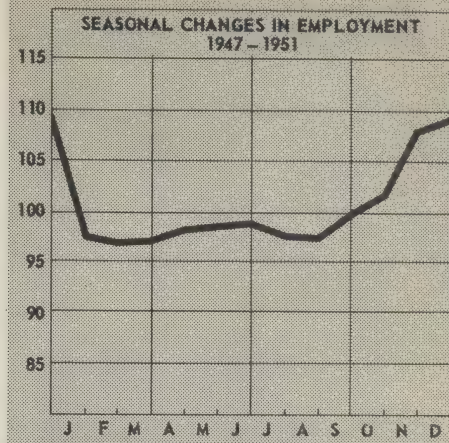
The chief method used to reduce seasonal employment variations in this industry is to postpone work which can be done in winter till that time. In many cases this refers particularly to inside work such as maintenance of equipment and underground lines, and material salvage. In other cases it means doing outside work in summer in inaccessible areas or where weather conditions are extreme, leaving similar



work for winter in accessible areas or where weather conditions are favourable. Some firms try to get poles set in the ground before freeze-up so that the remainder of line construction can proceed in the winter. Tree trimming is another activity which is feasible in cold weather.

According to some reports, new methods and equipment make year-round operations possible. A few companies operate training schools in winter and a very few others try to dovetail their operations with other seasonal industries such as logging.

## Retail Trade



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in retail trade at the time of peak activity each year is about 13 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period. Provincially, the ratios vary from 12 per cent in Ontario to 22 per cent in New Brunswick; they are generally higher for the Maritime and Prairie provinces than for the others.

About one-tenth of the retail tradesmen reporting to the Survey<sup>(1)</sup> say they have no seasonal employment variations. The others estimate their seasonal increases in employment to range up to less than 100 per cent of their minimum employment. Almost all have seasonal increases of 50 per cent or less. Maximum employment occurs in the fall and minimum employment in the winter; spring and summer are seasons of average employment.

One of the larger department stores presents an interesting analysis of the seasonal employment variations which it experiences. The employees are classified in two groups—persons actively engaged in selling, and persons engaged in allied activities such as advertising, maintenance, delivery, etc. The non-selling group (about 58 per cent of the total) drops to its lowest point in August (about 95 per cent of the annual average) and reaches its maximum number in December (111 per cent of the annual average). The selling group drops to its lowest number in February (90 per cent of the annual average) and reaches its largest figure in December (150 per cent of the annual average).

### CAUSES

Seasonal variations in retail trade differ with the product or products which the merchant carries. Generally, sales and employment rise at Christmas and to a lesser extent at Easter and at other special times such as Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, etc. Certain lines of merchandise are subject to their own peculiar seasonal demand or supply fluctuations. Clothing and automobiles, for example, are subject to seasonal

<sup>(1)</sup> The Survey covered department stores and mail order houses only.

fluctuations in both demand and supply. Department stores and supermarkets are affected less by seasonal changes than are speciality shops such as fur salons. Stores that cater to rural trade are probably affected more than those that rely on an urban population for their sales.

These differences must all be considered when interpreting seasonal employment variations for the industry as a whole. Seasonal variations in different sectors of retail trade may offset one another, the divergent tendencies being cancelled out in figures for retail trade as a whole. In addition, many retail outlets hire housewives, school teachers, students, and other persons not continuously in the labour force for extra help during the Christmas rush and during other periods when additional workers are needed. For this reason the impact of seasonality in retail trade on employment may be less of a problem than the statistics would suggest.

Almost all retail tradesmen say that seasonal fluctuations in demand for commodities cause seasonal variations in their employment. These fluctuations arise from causes already mentioned, principally the Christmas and Easter seasons. Other causes are seasonal climatic changes which affect the types of goods sold, style changes, vacations and other special seasons or days.

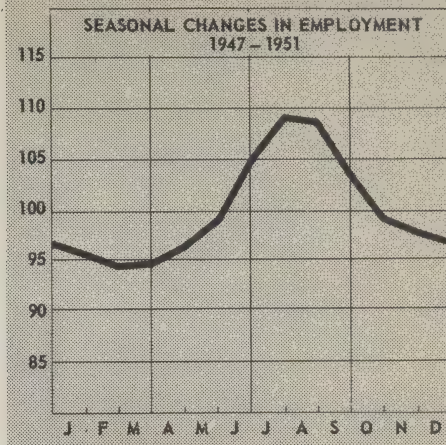
#### REMEDIES

Although fluctuations in demand are the chief cause of seasonal employment variations in the industry, the methods adopted to reduce employment variations are chiefly indirect: more use of self-serve fixtures, and transfers of employees from department to department as the seasonal pattern of demand changes. The only direct attack made on seasonal variations in demand is advertising campaigns to induce people to do their Christmas shopping early. These have had limited success.

Some employers deem it to their advantage to retain experienced sales help even if the level of business does not warrant their retention. Many of the reports say that sales clerks are easily recruited among persons like students and housewives who are not continuous members of the labour force. This system, employers believe, is beneficial to all concerned and they see no need for making alterations.



## Hotels and Restaurants



### EXTENT

The average number of workers employed in hotels and restaurants at the time of peak activity each year is about 16 per cent greater than the number employed at the lowest point in the slack period.

The ratio for Alberta, where there is a high proportion of summer hotels, is much higher—66 per cent—but for Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Colombia, the ratios are less than the national average.

One-third of the hotel operators reporting to the Survey<sup>(1)</sup> state that they have no seasonal variations in employment; an additional half of the operators estimate their seasonal increases in employment to be less than 25 per cent of their minimum employment; and the remainder have very large seasonal employment increases. The last group includes several summer resort hotels which shut down completely for eight months of the year.

The usual busy season for hotels is summer but the slack season is less distinct, extending from fall till spring. Winter is the season of least activity.

### CAUSES

Seasonal fluctuations in demand for the service of hotels are the chief cause of seasonal variations in their employment. Demand is influenced by vacations in summer and, in some cases, by the locations of the hotels (near beaches, parks or other recreational facilities). There are, however, some hotels which experience a drop in business during the summer. Another busy period for many hotels is the Christmas season although it does not appear to cause any variation in employment. Some hotels must hire vacation replacements to cover the holidays of their staffs, with resulting seasonal variations in their employment.

<sup>(1)</sup> The Survey covered hotels only.

## REMEDIES

Only a few hotels attempt to reduce seasonal variations in their employment. The methods chiefly used are arranging vacations for slack periods and keeping convention bookings away from busy periods and attempting to arrange them for otherwise slack periods. Some hotels hire students as vacation replacements; this does not reduce seasonal employment variations but it does reduce seasonal unemployment since the students leave the labour force when their jobs come to an end. In a few cases, hotels use extensive advertising and reduce winter rates to attract guests and conventions.

## Industry Notes

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### Logging

The percentage variations in logging employment quoted in this booklet are calculated from Dominion Bureau of Statistics indexes of employment for forestry rather than for logging. Forestry is chiefly logging but also includes forestry services such as forestry patrol, fire inspection, reforestation, etc., whether by government departments or other organizations. Since forestry services are largely non-seasonal activities, seasonal variations in logging employment are probably greater than stated above. Furthermore, logging itself includes towing or transporting logs, in addition to the woods operations of all companies, contractors and individuals who cut logs for any purpose. Since towing logs is largely a summer activity it tends to make seasonal employment variations in logging less than they would be if only woods operations were included in the industry.

### Saw and Planing Mills

The saw and planing mill industry includes all companies primarily engaged in operating plywood and veneer mills, saw mills, and planing mills. Many companies operate two or exceptionally all three types of mill, and may engage in logging as well.

### Pulp and Paper Mills

The pulp and paper mill industry includes all companies producing mechanical or chemical wood-pulp and all kinds of paper. Many pulp and paper companies undertake their own logging on either a direct or a contract basis and they also buy large quantities of pulpwood from independent loggers.

### Non-Metal Mining

The non-metal mining industry consists of all companies primarily engaged in the mining of non-metals such as asbestos, gypsum, salt (including recovery of salt from brine wells), mica, feldspar, graphite, peat moss, sodium sulphate, etc. Many of these companies also undertake the primary processing and refining of these non-metallic minerals.

### Meat Products

The meat products industry is composed of all companies primarily engaged in operating abattoirs and meat-packing plants. These operations may involve processing fresh, cured and smoked meats and animal oils and fats, and processing or canning poultry.

### Dairy Products

The dairy products industry is composed of all companies primarily engaged in manufacturing milk products of any kind: cheese and butter; condensed, canned and powdered milk; processed cheese and cheese products; and other dairy products such as ice-cream and other frozen desserts.



### **Carbonated Beverages**

The carbonated beverages industry includes all companies primarily engaged in manufacturing non-alcoholic beverages and carbonated mineral waters (but not those engaged in bottling natural mineral spring waters). The figures on seasonal variations quoted in this booklet are based on employment indexes for "Other Beverages", a title used to cover wines as well as carbonated beverages.

Wine manufacturers have almost constant employment except for the short period of the grape harvest when large numbers of casual workers are employed. Little has been done to reduce these variations since many of the casual workers do not want year-round jobs. Average employment in wineries is only about 7 per cent of total employment in the "Other Beverages" industry.

### **Canned and Cured Fish**

The canned and cured fish industry includes all companies primarily engaged in cooking and canning fish and other seafoods, and in curing or quick-freezing.

### **Canned and Preserved Fruits and Vegetables**

The canned and preserved fruits and vegetables industry includes all companies primarily engaged in manufacturing canned and dried fruits and vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, soups, preserves, jams, jellies, pickles, sauces, vinegar and cider. It also includes plants which quick-freeze fruits and vegetables.

### **Women's Clothing**

The women's clothing industry is composed of all companies primarily engaged in manufacturing women's wearing apparel.

### **Agricultural Implements**

The agricultural implements industry is composed of all companies primarily engaged in manufacturing all types of agricultural implements and machines, except agricultural hand tools.

### **Shipbuilding and Repairing**

The shipbuilding and repairing industry includes all companies primarily engaged in building all types of ships of iron and steel construction and other vessels (including wooden fishing boats) of five tons or over.

### **Construction**

Employers in the construction industry are divided into two classes of operators—"general" contractors and "special trade" contractors. General contractors are those who sign contracts covering construction jobs in their entirety. Special trade contractors perform only part of the work covered by a general contract; all sub-contractors are classified as special trade contractors. All jobbing trade work performed directly for owners is classified as special trade work, as is repair and maintenance work, not including repair and maintenance work carried out by maintenance staffs of the buildings where the work is performed.

General contractors may be divided into two groups: those who construct "buildings and structures" and those who construct "highways, bridges and streets". The first covers all general contractors primarily engaged in constructing houses, barns, stores, factories, public buildings, hydro-electric plants, transmission and telephone lines, power canals, dams, dikes, harbours, canals, docks, piers and airports. "Highways, bridges and streets" covers general contractors engaged in constructing highways, grade separations, streets, water-works, gas mains, sewers, bridges and viaducts. Only the construction of railway

right-of-way and structures by general contractors is excluded but the number of employees involved is very small since most railway construction is done by the railways themselves. Special trade contractors include all contractors primarily engaged in performing one or more of the following special trades: bricklaying, carpentry, electrical work, plastering, painting, plumbing, roofing, etc.

#### **Water Transportation**

The water transportation industry includes all companies primarily engaged in the operation of vessels for the transportation of freight and passengers whether overseas or on inland or intercoastal waterways. It also includes local water transportation—the operation of ferries, lighters and other harbour vessels, and marine towing and tug boat service. Services incidental to water transportation are likewise included in the industry: the operation of piers, docks, wharves and associated facilities; stevedoring; salvage, harbour commissions; steamship agencies; and the operation of lighthouses and canals.

#### **Grain Elevators**

The grain elevators industry includes all companies and cooperatives primarily engaged in the operation of country or terminal grain elevators.

#### **Electric Light and Power**

The electric light and power industry includes all organizations, whether public bodies or private companies, primarily engaged in the generation, transmission, or distribution of electricity. In many areas generation and transmission are separated from distribution, the latter function being undertaken by local hydro-electric or public utilities Commissions. Many of these organizations undertake their own construction, either wholly or in part, of electric generating stations and substations, and of transmission and distribution lines.

#### **Retail Trade**

The retail trade industry includes all companies primarily engaged in retailing commodities of any kind either directly or by mail.

#### **Hotels and Restaurants**

The hotels and restaurants industry is composed of all companies, organizations, and individuals primarily engaged in furnishing lodging, with or without meals, and camping places and facilities, and in serving meals, food and drink.







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